

REMARKS

The present Amendment is in response to the Official Action mailed December 11, 1007. Claim 1 has been amended. Therefore, claims 1-14, 17, 18, and 20-23 remain currently pending. The following sets forth Applicants' comments relating to the currently pending claims and the outstanding Action.

As an initial matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for conducting yet another telephone discussion on March 5, 2007 with Applicants' undersigned counsel. In that discussion, an agreement as to amendments that could be made to independent claim 1 in order to move such claim into a condition of allowance were agreed upon. Specifically, the Examiner made suggestions, which are also alluded to in the Official Action, that Applicants better define the direction in which the length of the elongate slot extends along the first body portion. The Examiner and Applicants' counsel ultimately agreed upon the above-made amendments to independent claim 1. Essentially, the polymeric body portion has now been defined as having a longitudinal axis, where the length of the elongate slot extends parallel with the longitudinal axis. The Examiner acknowledged that this is clearly not taught by U.S. Patent No. 5,749,876 to Duvillier et al. ("Duvillier"), and as such, his rejections of claims 1-7, 9, 10, 12, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is no longer proper.

Although each of dependent claims 2-7, 9, 10, 12, and 13 (dependent claims 8 and 11 have been noted as allowable) are not specifically discussed herein, Applicants respectfully assert that such claims are allowable based solely upon their proper dependence from now allowable independent claim 1. Given that remaining claims 14, 17, 18, and 20-23 are noted in the action as constituting allowable subject matter, allowance of each and every one of the currently pending claims is earnestly solicited. Applicants do note here that claims 21-23, which

properly depend from allowable claim 20, were improperly noted as rejected in the Action. Thus, Applicants also respectfully request removal of the rejections of those claims.

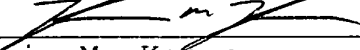
Applicants note that the Examiner indicated that the above-made amendments would require an additional search, but that should he find certain other pertinent prior art references, any additional rejection which are made in light of same, would not be made final. Applicants respectfully thank the Examiner for this indication, and request that he contact their undersigned counsel in lieu of issuing yet another formal written Action.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: March 11, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Kevin M. Kocun
Registration No.: 54,230
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG,
KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK, LLP
600 South Avenue West
Westfield, New Jersey 07090
(908) 654-5000
Attorney for Applicants